

Mr. Speaker, on December 20, 2012, I inadvertently cast a ``yes" vote for this bill. I intended to vote ``no."

There is no question that this legislation contains some important provisions that will benefit our troops and their families, including a small (1.7%) pay raise, special pay and bonuses (such as special retention pay for aviators, nurses, etc.), additional funding for family housing and support services, and other helpful measures. I was pleased that the final bill included a provision I authored that creates a permanent National Language Service Corps within the Defense Department.

The NLSC currently exists as a pilot program that has recruited more than 1,800 members. To date, Corps members have worked with the Department of the Navy, the National Security Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other federal agencies. For instance, the NLSC provided translation and interpretation support services to the U.S. Army Pacific for counterinsurgency training in Thailand. Far too few Americans can speak or understand foreign languages, and as a result, we are hampered in participating in global commerce and in defending our national security. The permanent establishment of the National Language Service Corps is a meaningful step toward helping our government meet its foreign language needs.

Unfortunately, this bill fails to address some key issues of concern to my constituents.

For example, the bill continues funding for an exo-atmospheric kill vehicle--a provocative and destabilizing system that will waste millions more on our failed national missile defense effort. The bill perpetuates a bloated nuclear weapons complex that does not enhance our security and in fact compromises our nonproliferation efforts. Worse, the bill continues to fund our combat operations in Afghanistan, instead of restricting the use of those funds to withdrawal-related operations only. There is simply no reason--military or political--for us to continue the war in Afghanistan. In the broadest sense, this bill continues the acquisition programs and policies that have been in place for decades. This bill does nothing to fundamentally reshape and downsize our armed forces. It continues Cold War weapons acquisition programs that have no place in a 21st century where the threats are vastly more diffuse and dispersed. For all these reasons, I cannot support this bill.

**National Defense Authorization Act Remarks**

Friday, 21 December 2012 00:00

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